

# LET'S GO APPLE PICKING!

## Aviated Dinosaur

Apples have always been Daisy's favorite food. Those juicy fruits always seem to calm empty bellies panhandling for a quick snack, every jovial bite dancing on an eager tongue. They star in pies that make you float with its aroma, dress up in sticky peanut butter, ever appear in pigs' mouths and silver platters.

Of course, there's nothing wrong with eating apples in their purest form—skin and all—or slicing them into little wedges and dunking them into caramel sauce like french fries; what other fruit creates rainbows with its varieties?

Speaking of caramel, apples love cloaking themselves in that sweet candy, especially the green ones. Decorated with crunchy peanuts or flaky cereal, they wear the original glossy golden brown or the other original red caramels — both make an October classic.

Do *plain* caramel apples exist?

Apples might keep doctors away, but they're a dentist's best friend.

"Why does it have to be apples?"

Arnold's protest snapped Daisy out of her apple-induced daydream.

His usually cheerful smile's nowhere to be seen, being replaced by a pouty frown. His eyebrows pointed downwards, acknowledging his red-painted eyes; Arnold's face was almost indistinguishable from his scarlet fur, his ears folded back.

"Arnold, you've been whining all morning," Daisy groaned.

"I hate apples."

"You've never *tried* an apple before."

"But the skin is icky."

"How would you know?"

"Because I just do."

"You never tried one."

The scarlet fox snarled, "I don't like apples, and I'll never try one."

Daisy rolled her eyes, then returned to her apple wonderland.

"Why don't we go to a pumpkin patch?" Arnold complained, "I like pumpkins."

"Arnold, we're not going to a pumpkin patch," the burnt orange fox snapped, her brother's tantrum once again invading her daydream.

"For once, I'd like to go to one."

"Well, we're almost at the apple farm. Stop your whining."

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With a beaming smile, Daisy inhaled the crisp, chilly autumn air, the dusty leaves filling it with whatever moisture remains from the morning's mist, wearing a perfume best described as pollen; even with these vernal scents, fall's dryness dominates the air— a grim reminder of the frozen solstice yet to come.

She exhaled, then proclaimed, "What a great day for apple-picking."

Her brother, however, fiddled with a scarlet apple leaf. *It just had to be apples.*

"Stop being such a sourpuss."

"Make me," Arnold demanded, still playing with the leaf.

Luscious reds, young greens, brilliant yellows, even wise browns and mature oranges dress this orchard's walkways, all to be marred by fallen apples wickedly polluting the leaf-covered path the siblings walk on.

"You should really try apples," Daisy insisted, "You eat applesauce."

"Applesauce isn't an apple."

She rolled her eyes. "Try one, please?"

Looking around the orchard, Arnold noticed the apples still littering the ground; shiny (though probably poisonous) red apples glistened proudly, while the bright green apples screamed among the ground, and the yellow ones abandoned and lonely. Alas, most of these apples play in the dirt — no wonder worms like them. “I’ll pass.”

“Here,” the burnt orange fox picked up a nearby apple, “this one’s as red as you.”

“No, thank you.”

“C’mon, just a *tiny* bite?”

“I don’t care if it’s in a pie or on its own: I won’t eat apples, and I never—”

“Just eat it!” Daisy impatiently shoved the apple into her brother’s mouth like a pig at a luau.

Much to both of the siblings’ surprise, Arnold started chewing the bite forcefully clamped into his mouth.

*Amazing*, Arnold thought, *this isn’t bad— this doesn’t taste bitter or rotten at all. Instead, it’s candy from a tree. I’m not poisoned, and I can’t taste any worms.*

“So?”

Arnold faced his sister, his once sour demeanor replaced by a humongous grin. “I like it.”

“See, I told you so.”

With a newfound love for apples, Arnold was scouting the ground until he found a green one; then, he chomped into it. His eyes widened, then squinted closed, his lips curled inward, and his jaw stiffened for a minute.

“Yeah, those taste better in pies and stuff,” Daisy mentioned.

*Now you tell me.*

The scarlet fox then grabbed a nearby yellow apple and foolishly bit into it in the same haphazard manner. If the red apples were candy, then the yellow ones must be sugar bowls.

“Let’s find more apples.”

While Daisy searched on the ground, Arnold turned his attention to the trees. Towering and numerous, these are where apples are raised, grow up, and leave; apple trees are excellent scientists, smacking Newton with an apple upon his head. Maybe Johnny Appleseed planted these trees.

Something caught the corner of Arnold's sight: a branch with the largest apple he has ever seen. The sun reflected off the apple's skin, emphasizing its plumpness; he could even envision crunching into the apple, savoring the sweet juices coursing through the fruit. Taunting the fox, the arrogant branch swayed the apple back and forth, making sure the apple never fell in anyone's greedy palms.

Meanwhile, Daisy picked up the dirt-playing apples and softly put them into a nearby crate, humming a made-up tune, oblivious to the yummy prize hanging from the tree behind her.

"Found any good apples yet?" Daisy asked before catching her brother already racing up the tree.

"Arnold," she cried, "what the heck are you doing?"

"What does it look like?" Arnold leaped onto the branch.

"You could get hurt."

"No, I won't." Carefully, he snuck up to the precious apple.

"But, what if you fall?"

"Daisy, I'm not gonna fall." The scarlet fox reached out for the apple, feeling the reward inching closer within his grasp and into his belly.

*Careful, Arnold...*

Just as the apple was within Arnold's reach, it rapidly grew farther from it, the air rushing upwards through his fur and a scream instinctively escaping from his mouth.

\*THUD\*

"Arnold!" The burnt orange fox dashed to his side.

Arnold (still on his back) gazed up at the branch, mockingly dangling the juicy red apple over his face. *Stupid branch.*

"Are you-" his sister snickered, "A-are you..."

"Not a word."

Unable to contain her giggles any longer, she erupted into laughter, relieved that the only thing severely fractured was her brother's ego. "I told you so, Arnold, I told you you'll fall."

"Shut up." The scarlet fox got up and dusted himself off, his face still glowing red from his wounded pride.

"Oh, Arnold." Daisy gave her brother a hug. "Maybe you should use a ladder next time."

Arnold growled, then begrudgingly searched through the apples on the ground. *One day*, he promised, *I'll get the biggest apple you've ever seen.*

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